



## SUN-LIBERTY 34

Back in the early 1980s, Jeanneau set a radically new trend both in yacht design and building with their Sun-Fizz, a forty-foot performance sailboat claimed to be the first of her size with twin quarter cabins and a layout much loved by the yacht charter industry. Now, ten years on, Jeanneau are again breaking new ground with their Sun-Liberty 34, a subtle blend of conventional boatbuilding, advanced materials and a more traditional yet exciting interior design aimed squarely at the discerning private owner.

Sun-Fizz marked the beginning of a range of yachts that now include, at one end of the spectrum, the twenty-three foot, wing-keeled trailer sailer Sun-Way 21, and at the other, a fifty-one foot ocean cruiser-racer called Sun-Odyssey. One is obviously aimed at the young family while the other is intended for more extensive deep-sea cruising and racing. Not much in common there you might think, but not so. According to Jeanneau, both share an underlying philosophy of combining performance sailing with comfortable, spacious accommodation.

However, another factor contributed to the success of the Sun-Fizz; she was the first yacht of her size to be 'production' built and so had a considerable advantage on price over her individually built rivals. But the passage of time has seen an increasing number of major builders expanding into the over-thirty-foot production market with the result that Jeanneau no longer seem to have the competitive edge when it comes to the bottom line. At £54,875 plus VAT, Euroyachts, Jeanneau's main UK distributor, admit that the Sun-Liberty is perhaps more expen-

sive than many others of her size. She compares directly with, say, the Dehler 34 at £44,500, the Sadler 34 at £44,625 or even the Aft cabin 346 from Moody at £50,190 (all ex. VAT).

According to her builders the reason for her higher price is reflected by her quality and finish. A great deal more effort has been put into her interior design than ever before; and it shows. Another factor is the extensive use of Kevlar in the hull. This is something perhaps not apparent when you look at the boat but provides very much higher impact resistance than conventional GRP construction — an important point when you consider the debris that today litters our sea. There is also a third factor: although Jeanneau pioneered the productionisation of larger yachts, they recognise that some of the compromises accepted in the name of economy are not always conducive to the best results. There are times when craftsmanship and finish count more than speed of assembly.

Designed by Daniel Andrieu, anyone scanning the lines of her hull, one could be forgiven for thinking that all yachts are beginning to look the same — certainly all modern Jeanneaus including the Sun-Liberty 34. She has very flat bottom sec-



tions, sweeping up in a soft curve to an all but straight sheer line. Her forward sections have a moderately sharp entry while after sections are broad with a high level of buoyancy carried well aft. The overall result is a very buoyant shape designed to slip easily through the water with little fuss. Her keel which is simply bolted directly onto the bottom of the hull with flexible sealant between hull and keel, is semi-elliptical with a bulb to keep the centre of gravity low. There are, in fact, two options: a standard keel giving a draft of 6ft 3in and a shallow draft version with 4ft 10in draft. Keel bolts are in pairs linked on the inside of the hull by stainless steel plates which are laminated over mainly to provide a final seal to the keel bolts and to ensure that they stay locked firmly in place. A series of box section floors strengthen the keel attachment area and a pair of longitudinal stringers either side increase the stiffness at the turn of the bilges.

The construction of her hull is a combination of traditional GRP boatbuilding techniques coupled with modern materials. Sadly, her builders would not reveal the types of resin used in either the gelcoat or the lay-up. All they would say was that they use a traditional resin — poly-

ester — with a *small touch* from Jeanneau. The gelcoat is spray applied and is followed by a hand laminated lay-up. But in addition to the conventional glass mat used in the lamination, Jeanneau incorporate Kevlar in the form of Aramat K, a woven mat containing 20 percent Kevlar by weight. It was developed especially for Jeanneau by Du Pont in collaboration with Chomarat who are responsible for weaving the material.

This combination of glass and Kevlar is said to overcome the problems some builders have experienced with Kevlar reinforcement where resin tended to run off, but so far as the owner is concerned, Aramat K provides one overriding benefit: weight-for-weight it doubles tensile strength and impact resistance. And it's interesting to note that Jeanneau have not used this increased strength as a reason for reducing hull weight. They prefer instead, to give the customer the benefit of a stronger hull.

When designing the deck, someone has obviously remembered that the deck is not just something to keep the inside of the boat dry. For instance, the centre section of the coach roof has been left completely clear and a set of cushions can be fitted neatly between the handrails to create an

excellent sunbathing area. Unusual aboard a thirty-four footer but indicative of the thought and experience which have gone into her design. Similarly, halyards, mainsheet and topping lift are led back to the cockpit through conduits in the cabin top. They exit just forward of the winches which are set in recesses on either side of the companionway. The result is a complete lack of 'string' across the coachroof which, if nothing else, makes things a lot neater. There is room to rig spare halyards should her owner so wish.

Another striking feature of the deck layout is her very clear side decks, made possible by her double spreader rig with a narrow shroud base. Shroud plates are set in the angled sides of the coachroof, allowing the jib sheet tracks to be sited on the coachroof edges, maintaining clear side decks and providing a tight sheeting angle. As standard, she is fitted with slab reefing and the reefing lines are taken to the base of the mast. If an owner should so wish, the reefing lines can be brought back through the conduits to the cockpit.

Another on-deck feature worthy of note is the anchor and chain stowage locker which allows the anchor to be stowed ready for immediate use and will self-launch and stow.



The deck moulding itself has balsa sandwich reinforcement to provide light-weight stiffness and the hull to deck joint comprises an inward facing flange on the hull on which the deck sits and is through bolted onto a Sikaflex sealant. The joint incorporates an aluminium toe rail which holds a rubber fender strip and provides extra support for the stanchion bases. Noticeable by their absence, however, are cleats for springs.

Below decks, the major development is in the way they have used the accommodation space. Until now, most production boatbuilders have kept at least one eye fixed firmly of the charter fleet market when planning a new boat, and that has been especially so for the big European builders. Very bluntly, the more bodies that can sleep aboard a charter yacht, the better. A good example of this is perhaps Jeanneau's Sun-Light 31 which has a waterline length of under twenty-six feet and in one version, can sleep up to seven adults.

Jeanneau, however, have re-discovered the idea that some owners want a comfortable yacht rather than a sailing dormitory. And so the Sun-Liberty 34 was conceived as a fast sailing yacht with a layout suitable for either a couple with two children or just two couples. Benoit Coquard was responsible for the styling and décor, and from what we have seen so far, she certainly reflects the care lavished on both the overall concept and the detailed design of her accommodation. Using curved seating in the main saloon he has created a 'round' living space which should be equally cosy with two or five people sitting round the fold-down table.

On the practical side, the five-inch thick saloon settee cushions have removable covers and the grade of foam satisfies the standards laid down by Bureau Veritas for fire resistance. Both the forward and after cabins have their own heads' compartments and with doors shut, there is sufficient floor area in both to stand and dress.

The L-shaped galley is to port of the companionway and is separated from the main saloon area by the chart table. Commendably, Jeanneau have had the foresight to install conduits under the cabin headlining between the chart table and the base of the mast to simplify the fitting of navigational instruments.

Our only real criticism of the accommodation is that the quarter cabin has only one exit, which would make escape very difficult in the case of a fire in the main saloon area. This is a problem few builders have addressed as yet and we would like to see full size escape hatches rather than small opening ports between quarter cabins and cockpits.

What about warranties? With Jeanneau so secretive about the resins they use it's important to know exactly where you stand if anything should go wrong. Euroyachts and Jeanneau offer a five-year warranty on all boats sold in the UK to private customers. This covers not only the 'standard' hull warranty but any major defects, they say, arising in the main structure of the boat. It does not, however, cover 'bought-in' components such as winches, mast, sails...

But on the subject of warranty, we noticed an interesting piece in an American boating newspaper *Soundings*. Out of three claims they investigated made against three separate builders in cases where replacement would have been in order, only Jeanneau agreed to provide the aggrieved owner with a new boat to replace his Jeanneau 34 that had problems around the keel area.

At the time of writing, Jeanneau haven't a production Sun-Liberty 34 available for us to sail. However, when they unveil her at the Southampton Boat Show next month, she will not be an untried boat. Several pre-production models will have been put through a full season's hard sailing. That should have shaken out any teething troubles and will ensure that owners of the first boats off the production line are not part of a development program — something other builders would do well to emulate. Meanwhile you will be able to check her out yourself at the Show and later this year we will report on her sailing abilities. ●

#### Sun-Liberty 34

LOA .....	33ft	10in
Hull Length .....	32ft	9in
LWL .....	26ft	5in
Max Beam .....	11ft	6in
Waterline Beam .....	8ft	8in
Draft (deep fin) .....	6ft	3in
Displacement .....	10362	lb
Ballast .....	3351	lb
Sail Area .....	661	sq ft
Genoa .....	374	sq ft
Mainsail .....	287	sq ft
Price (ex VAT) .....	£54,875.00	
Builder .....	Jeanneau	
UK Agent .....	Euroyachts Clyde Place, Glasgow. Tel: 041 429 3766.	
	South Coast Office. Hamble Point Marina	
	Hamble. Tel: (0703) 455607.	